

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T STATE 173140

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SEATO, PORG, PFOR, AS, RP, TH

SUBJECT: SEATO

REF: STATE 169400

1. AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR SIR PATRICK SHAW CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB JULY 22 TO DISCUSS FURTHER THE SEATO MATTER. SIR PATRICK SAID THAT CANBERRA HAD AGREED TO HOLD UP ON EXPRESSING AUSTRALIAN VIEWS ON SEATO TO THE THAIS AND FILIPINOS UNTIL CONSIDERED US VIEWS HAD BEEN RECEIVED. BUT CANBERRA DID NOT WANT TO LET ITS POSITION SLIDE BY DEFAULT, SO WHILE CONFIRMING THAT AUSTRALIA STILL WAS WAITING FOR US VIEWS, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WILLESEE HAD DECIDED THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD PUT THE GOVERNMENTS OF THAILAND AND PHILIPPINES ON NOTICE THAT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT WAS REVIEWING ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS SEATO AND IN THIS CONNECTION WOULD WISH
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TO HAVE VIEWS OF REGIONAL MEMBERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

2. SIR PATRICK INDICATED SEATO HAD COME UP AT AUSTRALIAN CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE HELD IN CANBERRA RECENTLY. THE VIEWS OF THAT MEETING ON SEATO HAD BEEN ENDORSED BY FOREIGN MINISTER WILLESEE. AUSTRALIAN BELIEF IS THAT AUSTRALIAN INTERESTS LIE IN SEEING NEW STATES OF INDOCHINA

SETTLE DOWN AND ENTER INTO NORMAL AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS. AUSTRALIA WELCOMES SOME OVERTURES AND ADJUSTMENTS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE TO THAT END, AND BELIEVES THE WINDING DOWN OF SEATO COULD CONTRIBUTE TO THAT PROCESS.

3. IT WAS CLEAR THAT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT WAS TALKING ABOUT THE WINDING DOWN OF SEATO AS AN ORGANIZATION, WHILE THE MANILA PACT WOULD REMAIN IN FORCE, A FACT WHICH WAS NOT BROUGHT OUT BY SIR PATRICK AT EARLIER MEETINGS WITH HABIB.

4. HABIB SAID WE HAD INSTRUCTED OUR MISSIONS IN THAILAND AND PHILIPPINES NOT TO RAISE THE MATTER WITH THEIR GOVERNMENTS, SINCE WE FELT THIS SHOULD AWAIT FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH AUSTRALIA. THE KEY WAS THAILAND; OUR INDICATIONS WERE THAT THE THAIS WERE NOT AT ALL INTERESTED IN SCUTTling SEATO AT THIS POINT. WHATEVER WE DECIDED TO DO, TIMING WAS IMPORTANT. THE IMPORTANT THING WAS TO WORK OUT A POLICY AND THEN PROCEED IN FULL CONSULTATION AND AGREEMENT WITH ASIAN MEMBERS.

5. HABIB NOTED THAT IF THE AUSTRALIAN MISSIONS WERE JUST ASKING THE VIEWS OF THE THAIS AND FILIPINOS, THAT WAS ONE THING. BUT WE WOULD NOT WANT FIRM POSITIONS TO BE TAKEN BEFORE WE HAD HAD A CHANCE TO PUT FORWARD OUR IDEAS. WE HOPED TO HAVE THE CONSIDERED US OPINION CONCERNING OUR FUTURE POLICY TOWARDS SEATO READY TO CONVEY TO AUSTRALIA WITHIN THE WEEK. KISSINGER

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